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TO MY MOTHER.

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CONTENTS.



PART FIRST.

	PAGE
Study of Trees,	11
Whip-poor-will,	15
Moonrise,	16
Song,	18
A Sunset,	19
Twilight,	21
A Rainy Day,	22
Sunshine,	23
An Early Spring,	25
A Mocking-Bird,	27
Four Sonnets,	30
A Water-Lily,	34
Roses,	35
The Lost Moon,	36
Bees,	37
Westward,	39

PART SECOND.

	PAGE
Pursuing,	43
Possession,	44
Sunlight and Shadow,	45
Lovers,	50
From Below,	51
Absence,	53
A Country Lover,	55
A Fanatic,	57
A Freeman,	59
Good-Bye,	60
Protesilaus,	61
A Hand,	66
Margaret,	68
Skating,	71
A Woman's Work,	73
A Woman's Failure,	75
A Man's Failure,	80
Moonlight,	88
At Sea,	90
A Blasted Tree,	96
An Enemy,	99
The Good Pursuit,	101
A Path,	103

CONTENTS.

7

	PAGE
Anteros,	105
A Rose,	107
Compensation,	109
A Spring Song,	110
Faint Heart,	111
A Vagabond,	113
Unknown Blessings,	115
A Sinner,	117
Won and Lost,	121
Lost and Won,	124
The Life of Love,	127
Epilogue,	142

*I heard a bird
In the wood sing clear,
With a true soul's power of melody,
The very songs that my heart indeed
Had dimly dreamed of in its need,
Not knowing what it wished to hear,
But stung by the pain of a wish denied,
Till now it was known and satisfied ;
And in with the joy of the glorious song
There came a longing more than strong
For power but once, if it so must be,
To tell my love for him worthily.*

*But what is my love to the strong-voiced bird
Who never has heard of me—
Whom never I hope to see ?
Were it more, do you think, if its voice were heard ?*

PART FIRST.

P O E M S .

A STUDY OF TREES.

I.

WHAT a glorious thing to be
Is yonder oak I see !

Which stands alone with arms outspread,
Solemn voice and sunlit head

Boldly lifted to the skies,

Like a seer that prophesies

Of a glory even now

God has shed upon his brow.

II.

But I love better to see
The golden smile of the chestnut tree,
Which seems in itself to be
The truth as well as the prophecy ;
For it gives the light as well as receives,
And *is* what the other believes.

And I love it best of all
When it hails the wind with a shout,
Just winces once at the cutting frost—
More a quiver of joy than pain—
Then lifts its head,
And the boughs are tost,
And the nuts leap out
From the velvet bed,
And hurry away to the leaves that fall
From the joyous tree in a golden rain :
Then calls again
Till the children hear,

And answer back with a sudden cheer
That smites the air so pure and clear,
With a ringing music far and near.

Then a quick, quick beat
Of little feet,
And the place is won
And the work begun.

So they gather the fruit that is rightly theirs,
While the fatherly trees
Bending above, murmur the love
That they cannot say,
Nor the children hear, though a holy peace
Is creeping over them unawares,
To be needed and found in an after day.

O brave old trees ! when the gold is gone,
And the boughs are bare to the biting air,
And the children have left you all alone,
Shall I love you less ?

Nay, rather more ; for my loneliness
Shall have greater need of the cheering smile
 And the whispering voices passed away,
And a longing stronger, because in vain,
 For the blessed light of a dearer day,
Shall make me love you, looking the while
 At the thin black boughs on a sky of gray,
Shivering bare in the winter rain.

THE WHIP-POOR-WILL.

SAD and shrill, sad and shrill, sad and shrill
Comes the cry,

Whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will !

Below the gloomy alder boughs

The sullen brooklet darkly flows,

The wind creeps doubtfully by,

Faint and dim are the stars in the pale gray sky,

The dew falls heavily and chill ;

The slimy toad beside the moss-grown wall

And I, are all

That listen to the dreary cry,

Whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will, whip-poor-will !

MOONRISE.

LOOK at Orion above,
Steady and calm in the sky,
Strong in the strength of his love,
Though half of the night is gone by.
Clear and undimmed is his eye,
Though he yearns for the hour of grace ;
Cheerful and bright is his face,
Though the longing is eager and strong,
Though he knows that his waiting is long,
And that half of the night is gone by.
For he will not acknowledge the pain,
Nor believe that his love is in vain.

So he will cheerfully wait,
Looking and loving alone,
Till she comes in her glory and state,
The longed-for, the beautiful one.
Then when he sees her at last,
And the pride of her presence is known,
And the wearisome waiting is past,
And the joy of her love is his own,
Then shall he falter and fail ;
And the face that was steady and bright
Shall flush once and after be pale,
And the glorious eyes that so long
Could look out and illumine the night,
Shall tremble and change and be less,
And Orion the patient and strong,
When he knows that no waiting is vain,
Shall reel and be faint with excess
Of a joy that is keener than pain.

SONG.

I

THE butterfly may hover
Where gold-eyed daisies grow,
And round and round the clover
The drunken bee may go,
But the strong-winged bird flies over,
And leaves them there below.

2

The wind may keep on bringing
Sweet sounds to the leaves that sigh
The brook may join his singing
To the cricket's merry cry,
But the strong bird's song is ringing
Above them in the sky.

SUNSET.

I

O THE glory of the sky that is mine !

Far above, a stretch of blue,

With a veil of silver gray

Slipping downward to combine

With a shadow hardly seen

Of the palest fading green ;

And beneath,—

(How their edges seem to breathe

And to curl

In the fire that has burnt them through and
through !)

Adding purple to the pearl,

Are the moving clouds uprolled

From a sun that melts away

In a depth of glowing gold.

It is mine, all mine,
All the glory of the light.
And it cannot slip away
With the going of the day,
But I have and hold it fast ;
So when all the day is past
I will walk into the night,
 Make the darkness also mine,
And receiving it aright,
 Find it none the less divine !

TWILIGHT.

LOOK, how it dies away,
The glory of the West !

So goes another day

That should have made us blest.

And slow the silent shade

Creeps round us here alone,

Too sad to be afraid

Of aught the night may bring

To us whose day is gone

While we are wandering.

And yet there is a light

Which we shall find, I know,

That does not shine to show

The coming of the night.

A RAINY DAY.

A WIND that shrieks to the window pane,
A wind in the chimney moaning,
A wind that tramples the ripened grain,
And sets the trees a-groaning ;
A wind that is dizzy with whirling play,
A dozen winds that have lost their way
In spite of the others' calling.
A thump of apples on the ground,
A flutter and flurry and whirling round
Of leaves too soon a-dying ;
A tossing and streaming like hair unbound
Of the willow boughs a-flying ;
A lonely road and a gloomy lane,
An empty lake that is blistered with rain,
And a heavy sky that is falling.

SUNSHINE.

HERE is a thought which puzzles me.

Whether the fruitless tree,
Which shares the sunshine equally
 With all the rest,
Feels not a bitter feeling burn,
That makes the blessing half unblest,
 In that however he may yearn,
He cannot make return,—
Nay, more—can never prove
His gratitude and love,

Because to him it is denied
Like those more favored ones who grow
Else all unenvied at his side,
By wealth of golden fruit to show
How he has caught the genial glow,
And loves it with a perfect pride.

Or is he all content with this?—
To drink the sunlight, feel the bliss ;
Sure that the sun above
(Because himself so full of love)
Knows all the love he cannot speak,
That not his love, but he, is weak ;
And though he only may receive,
Can of his gratitude believe
That it may even greater be
Than that of golden-fruited tree.

AN EARLY SPRING.

I

WHAT if I found a crocus yesterday,
 And then a hyacinth in perfect bloom?
 They only prove this Southern March is May.
 I gain an earlier spring, but throw away
 Sweet days and nights which would have given me
 A longer joy than hyacinth-perfume,
 And surer promises than here I see
 Of better summer days than these can ever be.

Bloom, hyacinth and crocus—not for me ;

Shine, genial Sun—not genial to my heart ;

Blow, winds of Spring ; flow, waters fresh and
free,

And be to others what you cannot be

To those who will not bear with your delay,

But snatch and crush the joy you else impart.

O, little joy is there in blooming May

For him who knows not March and many a
doubtful day !

A MOCKING-BIRD.

I

THE bird whose singing I love the best,
 Of all the birds that I yet have heard,
 I think must be this mocking-bird,
 Whose song, as it follows unchecked and free
 The widening course of its sympathy,
 Has clearly the power to make me blest,
 Above the singing of all the rest.

2

Not Mocking-Bird, but Interpreter
 Of joys and longings the others in vain
 Had tried to infuse in their feeble strain,

Till the full song rose, and the thoughts astir
In the lesser songs were at once made plain,
And the sweet birds wondered to hear him fling,
In his sun-like way, to the waiting air
The strangest wealth of unceasing song ;
To whose completeness all sounds belong
Of flowing waters, and waving trees,
And the changing voice of the wandering breeze,
And the dreamy noises of early spring,
That, languidly borne on the moist, warm air,
Whisper—who knows what message?—there.

3

And Interpreter, too, for me. Ah, yes !
I too may listen and wonder to hear,
In an unvexed music, pure and clear,
That song of beauty, so hard to express,
Which yet shall be born of earth's restlessness,
When the passionate yearnings that nought availed,
The love that stammered, the faith that failed,

The soul's true dream that it could not prove,
All good thoughts, meant for the sky above,
That faltered and fell from a feeble lip,—
Shall make music at last—ah, hearts that long!—
And the discord be changed to a perfect song
That cannot falter, uprising strong
From the full, free faith of a living love,
And the joy of an infinite fellowship!

I.

HERE were the place to lie alone all day,
On shadowed grass beneath the sunlit trees,
With leaves forever trembling in the breeze,
While close beside, the brook keeps up alway
The old love-murmur, wooing me to stay
And hear the dreamy music all at ease.
The old love-murmur ; such she heard, I deem,
White Arethusa in her maiden grace,
When, naked after the fatiguing chase,
She bathed alone in Alpheus' shady stream,
And throwing back the wet hair from her face,
Listening a moment, half entranced did seem ;
Then frightened, from the rising God's embrace
Fled glistening, like the spirit of a dream.

II.

I CLIMB and stand upon the grassy height :
 Beneath a cloudless heaven's tranquillity,
 The sun is gone, and slowly comes the night
 Across the silent fields, but gloriously
 The West is shining with a golden light,
 Where purple hills stand sharp against the sky,
 And seem to girdle in the world, and keep
 An endless barrier 'tween the sea and land.
 I turn : below, just wakened from its sleep,
 The lake is beating music on the sand ;
 Above it, resting on the mountain steep,
 The naked beauty of the moon is seen,
 And a great joy comes to me, for I stand
 Between a birth and death alike serene.

III.

WITH half-closed eyes, within the swaying
boat,

I dream upon the beauty of the day :
The world with all its noise is far away ;
I only hear the cricket's endless note,
That mars not silence, seeming but to be
Its echo ; and the never-ceasing beat
Of sleepy ripples tossing dreamily :
Upon the boughs that shade me from the heat,
The birds sit fearlessly within my sight ;
Close to me nods a golden butterfly ;
Unstartled are the shining fish below ;
Surely, if I can read this day aright,
'Tis better to lie thus unfeared, than row
With sounding oars that scatter and affright.

IV.

I STAND where in the summer I have stood,
But all is changed. There is no sight of green
Save yonder, in the stiff-branched cedar wood,
Whose dull, cold leaves are gloomy to be seen ;
The little hill—great growth of grass was there,
Where jolly crickets leaped and sang before—
Rusty and dead, slopes slowly down to where
Foul ice lies stranded on the slimy shore,
For the sad river with a low, dull moan,
Leaving his shore flows sullenly apart ;
But I, who stand in silence here alone
Looking on these, am nothing sad at heart ;
For over all there is a pure, bright sky,
Wherein the sun is shining gloriously.

A WATER LILY.

TOUCH it not : too cold and white
It lies in its dreamy, silent sleep,
Over the waters still and deep,
Still and deep and dark as night.
Touch it not, for well I know,
Far away down deep below,
Its roots are tangled in the hair,
(Golden and long like this you wear,)
Floating over a face as fair,
And as white and still and cold, ah me !
As the voiceless flower reflected there
Dreaming over the mystery.
Touch it not, for such are we ;
Beautiful blossoms of Life that grow
O'er an unknown depth, with roots that lie
Floating, but linked with a secret tie
To a beautiful Death below.

ROSES.

LET Love live with the roses,
While they are fresh and fair,
While June's warm breath uncloses
Sweet secrets hidden there,
That charm the listening air.

For beauty of red roses
Is beauty though it goes,
And lesser love supposes
A greater, as He knows
Who made and loves the rose.

THE LOST MOON.

I

IN among the changing cirri,
Transient children of the noon,
Soulless shapes of mocking light,
Far away I see the moon,
All alone and pale and weary,
Looking, longing for the night.

2

Looking, longing, waiting, loving,
Ah! thou weary one but true,
Lost but faithful, well I know
Other souls that wander too,
Unapproved and unapproving,
Till the soulless ones shall go.

THE BEES.

I

HERE I lie alone in silence,
Listening, only half at ease,
To the dreamy, murmuring music
Of the never-weary bees,
That comes floating hither to me
On the light and fragrant breeze,
Like the whispered words of lovers
Underneath the blooming trees.
Ah, the bees, the joyous workers,—
If a man could work like these!

Is the secret lost for ever ?

Who shall answer me—who knows ?

But I hear it, darkly hinted at

In every wind that blows ;

Darkly sung or darkly whispered

Where the water falls or flows ;

Hear it everywhere, and miss it,

And, though hope yet lives and grows,

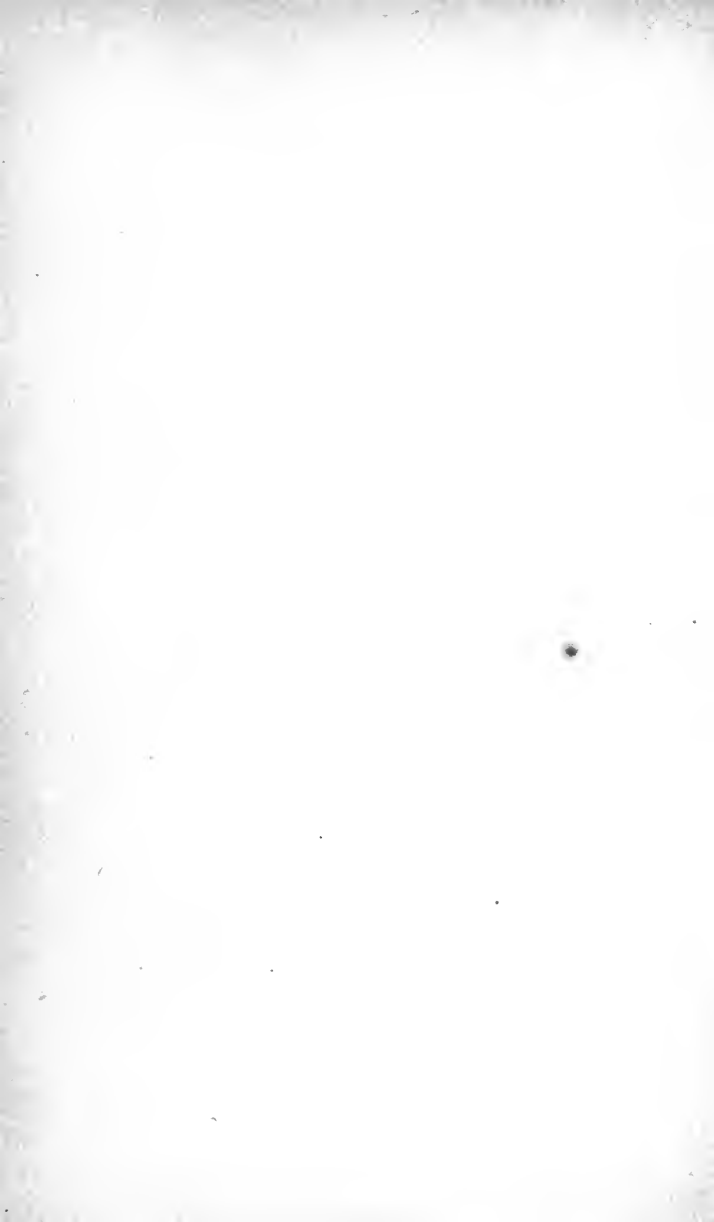
Half my life lies in the shadow

Of a pain that never goes.

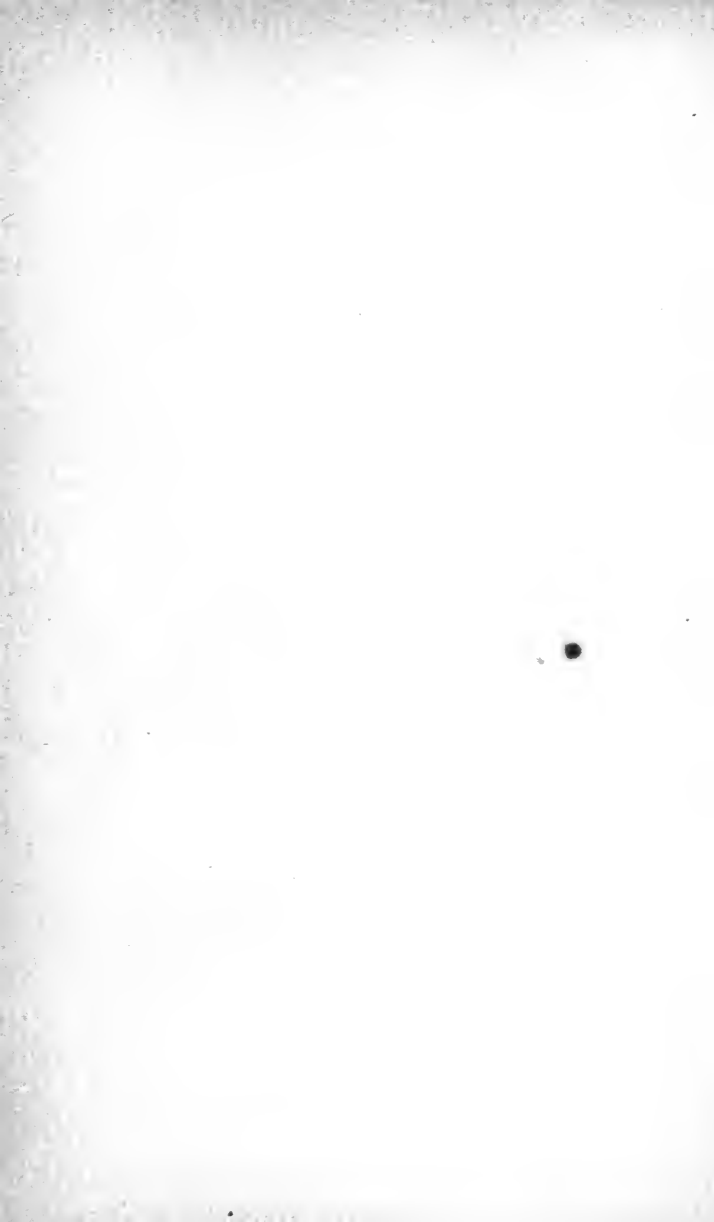
WESTWARD.

QUIVERING light of the golden sky,
Fade not yet, till the noises die
Of the busy world with its strife and toil.

Fade not yet, till thou glorify
This rising dust of the Earth's turmoil,
Gilding it, piercing it, till men's eyes
Are drawn to the far-off, quiet skies,
Where broadly writ on the shining West
Is a visible blessing, and promise of rest,
For the men who do as best they may
Each his work through the dusty day.



PART SECOND.



PURSUING.

I AM the moon, you are the sun,
O my beloved !

Too far removed

Ever by me to be won.

The sea is mine, if I stoop from above,
And the stars grow pale for the want of my love,
But I leave the stars and the longing sea,
For the fuller love that afar I see,
Ever so far removed from me.

Still I pursue, will I pursue,

Looking to you,

Over the wide, wide space

That keeps us apart,

Light on my face,

Love in my heart !

POSSESSION.

SINCE you cannot attain her,
 Forget her—disdain her?

Not so !

Rather be glad that she is so high,
 And keep on loving forever, although
 The stars that baffle you in the sky
 May as soon be won. 'Tis much to know
 That there *are* stars too far above
 To stoop to be won by me or you
 For an individual blessing ;
 Yet we are blest, for I hold this true :
 There's much in having, but more in love ;
 And love may be, so it seems to me,
 Complete without possessing.

SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW.

WHERE the still sunlight glided through
The one bright break in shade that grew
Else thickly, shutting out the blue,

She stood with her own thoughts alone,
Unconscious of the light that shone
About her as if all her own.

Tall, with the graceful height and mien
Of one whose life had ever been
A growth, through which she moved serene

To that high place of queenliness
Designed to be commanding less
Than to be blessed and to bless.

Her hair—it was too light for gold—
With simple grace was loosely rolled
From brows that never could look bold.

Her eyes lived in the clearest light
Of Love, that says, Would that I might
Change all the wrong I see to right !

And once looked on by those pure eyes,
The meanest wretch that crawls might rise
And be a man, to his surprise.

Her lips, just parted always, shone
With radiance of sweet smiles, each one
A cheerful song in undertone ;

Lips that Sir Galahad might kiss,
And, strengthened in his soul by this,
Ride on with greater faithfulness.

Her voice was low and soft, yet clear
With earnest sweetness—which to hear,
Was to be charmed from doubt and fear.

Completing it, there lay that trace
Of thoughtful sadness on her face
For which Love ever finds a place.

In all things she seemed such to me
As made me glad that there could be
Such glory in humanity.

And looking on her where she stood
Serene, with power to make good
The promise of true womanhood,

I thought, She is designed to be
A helper, with her purity,
From sin and all its misery ;

A woman, not to mix with strife,
But, working as the perfect wife,
To guide it in the ways of life.

And dare I hope that she may be
That truthful guide and help to me,
To aid by thought and sympathy ?

Shall I presume to make to pass
The dark shade of my life—alas !—
O'er hers, that yet no shadow has ?

O, would that I were worthy now,
And every day could worthier grow
To ask the love she can bestow !

But now for me 'tis only right
To thank God merely for the sight
Of one so beautifully bright ;

And ardent longing to restrain,
As from some flowers I would refrain,
Lest, touching them, I leave a stain,

And so disturb what else might be
The life of beauty, which to see
Is the best hope now left to me ;

To me, whose failure makes indeed
More urgent and more great my need
That others fail not, but succeed.

LOVERS.

FOR the man who woos her
To deserve but lose her,
That is hard to bear ;
Yet Truth's failure even
May be nearer Heaven
Than we are aware.

From the man who woos her
And deserves to lose her
Sadder tears may fall ;
But he whose successes
No true merit blesses,
Fails the most of all.

FROM BELOW.

I AM not one disposed to chide
For that full calm which men call pride,
That like a hiding brightness lies
Before those wide, unwavering eyes.

Who are you that would chide, and why?
Because that clear, undazzled eye
Keeps something constantly in view
So high that it looks over you?

Because there falls upon her ear
A sound that makes it deaf to hear
The little cries of love or hate
That issue from your lower state?

Nay, hush your cries ; they but confess
The secret pain of littleness,
Which sees above its paltry strife
The satire of a noble life.

For me, I am rejoiced indeed
That of my love she has no need ;
Raised far above the doubtful ways
In which I wander, glad to gaze

From far below, on such as she,
Who feel the light I dimly see,
And know that one has made her own
The peace for which I vainly moan.

And more—God shows in her the pain
Of all my strivings is not vain,
And makes me more than glad to know
How lovely life may hope to grow.

A B S E N C E.

I

I WONDER where she can be now !

Far away is all I know ;

Far away the glorious brow,

And the gold hair's rippling flow,

And the little rosy ear,

When I speak, so quick to hear,

And the eye's serenity,

And the sweet voice, clear and low,

That is speaking somewhere now,

Only not to me !

That is the strangest : somewhere now

She is speaking ; well I know

How the head is turned, and how

For a moment she will show

The little dimple when she smiles ;—

Only there are miles and miles

Stretched between us, and I sigh

For the sweet voice, clear and low,

Some one must be hearing now.

Would that it were I !

A COUNTRY LOVER.

HOW the brook murmurs down yonder,
 Past the black hole as it flows !

Maybe some dead man lies under :

Well, he's at rest, I suppose !

Will my brow never stop aching?

How the pain shoots through my head !

There are the crickets too, making

Noise that would worry the dead.

Butterflies lightly float over ;

How long ago did they crawl ?

Bees clinging fast to the clover,

Suck as if honey were all.

Suck away ! suck, my fine fellow ;
Much may be gathered—and lost !
And you, in your black and your yellow,
Wait till there comes a good frost !

Autumn will settle the matter
For you, and another I know ;
Then the young fop, with his chatter,
Back to the city will go.

And she, when the fooling and laughter
Are done, may put up with the smart—
Cutting enough—that comes after
Scorn of a true, loving heart.

Well, there they go to the sunset,
She on the sleeve of his coat :
O, if I could only once set
My hand to his delicate throat !

A FANATIC.

DO I grow weary, standing here alone,
Hated and feared of men because
I dare to see the truth God calls His own,
And, seeing, speak and will not pause ?
Not now—at least not since they hiss me so ;
For their worst curses come to me
But as a welcome voice, that bids me know
Their hate my hope of victory.
Let but the curses deepen to a roar,
And the roar shape itself at length
Into a war-cry, and I ask no more
Than that defiance to the strength

Of Truth herself, who speaks through me as yet

Her hatred of the sinful Past ;

But then—through her own thunders men forget,

And the good fight begins at last !

For Falsehood's fools, grown blinder, shall con-
found

Her craftiness with strength, and so,

Leading her forth to Truth's own battle-ground,

Shall bid her strike an open blow—

Her first and last—which she shall strike, and
fall ;

Add one more curse, do one more wrong,

And then by Truth be trampled once for all !

While I——sleep quietly and long,

Finding a sleep which will be pleasant then ;

But now, too full of shapes of woe,

And the sad wailings of my fellow-men,

Is terrible, and should be so.

A FREEMAN.

WHAT if he speak not—is he then less grand?
What if we know him not—does God not
know?

I tell you, he is bravely climbing from below,
And though he answer not to your demand,
Let him go on to seek the upper land.

His are the larger love, the wider sight,
That by the larger labor must be shown.

Let him go on, and we shall see, some night,
Some sad, wild night when doubts and darkness
grow,

Far over us a sudden blaze of light
Glow through the dark ; and thus it shall be known
Where he is standing on an unseen height,
And speaks no word, but waves a flaming brand,
That flames for us, but not for us alone.

GOOD-BYE.

GO, thou brave one ! now, as ever,
Strong to wed a true endeavor
To the hope within thee, growing
Ever stronger with thy going.

Where thy noble soul would lead thee,
To the darkness where they need thee,
Go, and fear not, O my brother !
God helps him who helps another.

PROTESILAUS.

“**H**E dies who first shall touch the Trojan
shore !”

The oracle has said, and soon the event
Must follow on the prophecy ; for now
Across the intervening waste I look,
And see the line of land where the dark waves,
Warned off by unseen powers, reluctantly
Fall back upon themselves. It is the shore,
The shore of Troy, which who first touches dies.

Who is he of the Greeks marked out to die ?—
To die thus at the threshold of his fame,
Denied the harvest of the planted past,
Held back from following the future years
Bright with unproven promises, which seem

So great at any time, so more than great
To him who sees them with despairing eyes ?
He loses all. For him the walls of Troy
Shall fall in vain ; unheard by him the hosts
Shall battle on the field ; and when at last
The long, glad cry of triumph shall go up,
To fill the air with shoutings to the skies,
He may not hear it, nor may he return
At any time across the beating sea,
A hero with the heroes, full of fame.

Who, then, would die ? The most would not, for each
Counting the greatness of the loss yet waits,
And looks upon his neighbor, saying, He
Can better go than I ; he loses less.

So they stand still. And there are some who fear
No shape of death that comes with clash of arms,
When they have fore-revenged themselves by deeds
Of glorious fight ; but to this certain death,
This sacrifice, whose victim may be stained

With no blood but his own, they have no will.
 And there are others with us, some great souls
 Who dare die willingly, not asking why .
 Or how ; but these, because they are so great,
 With thought and speech as well as with the sword,
 The present and the after time do need,
 And they must live, that the great cause die not.

And I have left me there in Thessaly
 The unfinished palace, and the one I love,
 Laodomia ; she, too, has a part
 In what I am. Her have I left alone,
 Save for the hope that overlooks the years
 And sees an end to waiting, hard to bear,
 And me returning gladly to her arms.
 For I, too, in the present work and live
 As one who does his work in haste, that he
 The sooner may return to those he loves ;
 Yet all the work he has to do, he does.
 And I will do my work : for this I left

Laodomia and my home ; for this
The Gods have made me strong and great of heart.
This work, what is it ? There are men enough
To war with Troy and right the Grecian wrong,
Save for the oracle. For men are brave,
Although each counts it loss to die at once
Before his arm has struck one blow at fame.
Yet many an one must die before Troy fall ;
And whether he die first or last, alone
Or in the rush and hurry of the strife,
What matters it unto the true heroic heart ?
Nay, then, I count him happiest of all,
Who thus can gather up his finished life,
And see the end of it, that it is well.
So is he hero to himself, though stained
With no blood but his own. And so this task,
Because it seems so hard unto the most,
Is worthy of the soul that would be great,
Marking its greatness by itself.

But she ?—

How altogether fall the heavy oars !
 For each one does the work he has to do ;
 How the sails swell and strain before the wind
 That blows us onward o'er the uneven sea !
 The sharp prow hurries through the parting wave,
 And we go proudly leading all the rest
 That seek the shore of Troy.

So be it then !

And you, Laodomia and my home,
 Farewell ! *I* am the one marked out to die !

A H A N D.

THAT is she—there is none so fair ;
 And that is the hand, still white, you see ;
 For she wears no glove, but shows it bare,
 As so much beauty should ever be.
 That is the hand. Did you think it red—
 Red all over with blood of his ?
 And are you amazed to find—for it is—
 The whitest hand o' the world instead,
 With only a hint of the rose's hue
 Where her own calm blood shows faintly through ?
 Yet that is the hand that did it all,
 That clear white hand that she dares to show,

And would let meet yours with a graceful fall,
That you might hold, if you wished it so,
And after kiss, as he kissed, they say,
Till your turn came, as it would some day,
And the hand dipped deep in another wrong.

O, truthful friend with the earnest eyes,
That look on hers with a sad surprise,
How she would smile in her quiet way,
Could she look quite through to your soul's
dismay !

For well she knows, she is thinking it now,
Quietly under the still white brow ;
And who should know it so well as she ?
Souls shed no blood for the world to see,
And there she is safe—how long ?

MARGARET.

WELL enough I bear it now,
While the Winter lingers yet,
Hiding all the fields with snow,—
Fields in which we walked, you know,
Not so very long ago,

Margaret !

While the skies are seldom clear,
And the winds are wild and rough,
While no song-bird dares appear,
And the trees are bare as yet,
I can bear it well enough,

Margaret.

Well enough ! I do my best
To remember only yet
What you were, and pass the rest,
Taking only for a test
That you once have made me blest,
Margaret !

Saying to myself, as I
See the weary waste of snow,
And the clouds about the sky,—
Fields and skies keep hidden yet,
Why not she ? 'tis winter now,
Margaret !

Ah ! but when Spring skies are blue
As the lost ones I regret,
When the trees, and song-birds, too,
Call me to the fields anew,
What, then, shall I think of you,
Margaret ?

Would the fields might never change,

Nor the skies again be blue,

So I might not think it strange

That you never come ! And yet,

'Tis too lonely without you,

Margaret !

SKATING.

I

AND so the waiting ends at last.
 The little hand falls like a leaf
 To mine, that fain would hold it fast ;
 For, after waiting, joy is brief,
 And sweetest moments soonest past.

2

And now together, side by side,
 Too swiftly o'er too short a way
 Of sunlit ice we smoothly glide,
 While all too soon the perfect day
 Is leaving us unsatisfied.

3

Too short a way for hearts that yearn ;
So far, no farther go the rest ;
But how for us, whose souls discern
A longing hard to be suppressed,
Shall we suppress it and return ?

4

Would we could leave all this to-day,
This little course, and skate afar,
Till all the twilight changed to gray,
And overhead rose many a star
To light us farther on our way !

5

Why not believe our hearts, obtain
This perfect day the offered grace,
And so live lives not all in vain ?
And yet she will not—here's the place :
Suppress the hope—we turn again.

A WOMAN'S WORK.

I HAVE seen her again to-day,
With the pale gold hair, and the eyes
Where the light of the sunset lay,
As it slipped from the perfect skies.

And the same still smile she wore,
That in heaven can hardly change,
Save to brighter, perhaps, than before,
As it ceases at last to be strange.

Yes, I saw her again, and am strong—
Strong to love and be true to the strife
Of my soul, that attempts to prolong
Its best moment, and make it a life,

Like to hers whom I love with my soul,
Though my love must be never made known,
Till the long journey ends at the goal,
Which for her sake I seek all alone.

All alone, but with joy, for I know
That 'tis better to climb for her love,
And to spend a whole life loving so,
Than that she should stoop once from above.

'Tis enough for this life of a day
That I love her, and say not a word,
But live like her, as like as I may,
Till the time comes at last to be heard ;

When I meet her in heaven, that is,
And she smiles as I say to her, Dear,
How I loved you on earth, know from this,
That I loved you, and followed you here.

A WOMAN'S FAILURE.

THIS is the fault I find with you :
That where you might so easily
Have drawn me onward to pursue,
And, it may be, at last attain
A true life's pure serenity,
You rather chose to stoop, and be
A dweller with me on the plain ;
So lessening the toil, 'tis true,
But at the cost of final gain.

For, mark now where we are to-day,
And think of where we might have been,
If you had only dared to say :
Since God has placed me on the height,
'Tis yours to climb the way between ;
For me, my love must still be seen
In the assertion of its right
To be an influence, while it may,
To call you upward to the light.

Would you had said it ! even though
The days had found me climbing on
Till now in toil and pain ! I know
That life had been for both of us,
Though more than half its years were gone,
A longer life for labor done,
And love still lovelier, proving thus,
To hearts that dared to wait and grow,
A love whose life is glorious.

Would you had said it ! Far above
The narrow circle of our plain
I see the shining heights remove
Still farther day by day, while we
Wear out sad lives, vexed by the pain
Of yearning that shall not attain,
Self-doomed for that one fault to see
Forevermore, in our best love,
A fatal insufficiency.

O too great waste ! And yet, indeed,
I know you stooped for pure love's sake,
Too self-forgetful then to heed
The cost of that false sacrifice
Whose fruit is bitter ; we must make
Atonement for the laws we break,
And Love's law says, Stoop not, but rise !
The love that grows is what you need :
Wait that—that only satisfies.

Both missed it, thinking so to gain
A crown we had not worked to win.
How fair it was ! But all in vain
We guard its greenness, and too late
Behold the lifeless leaves begin
To fall from stiffening thorns within :
Too true an emblem of our fate,
From which joy passes, leaving pain
To feed on love, and so grow great.

To feed on love,—then were it best
To crush them both, if haply so
We may obtain a little rest ?
Nay, love, not so ; the pain we bear
We conquer and shall use : I know
It draws us closer even now ;
And, though we failed to find the fair,
Full love which should have made us blest,
'Tis still *Love's* crown of thorns we wear.

And we will wear it, for Love's sake,
Endure Love's punishment, and do
Our best from every throb to take
Assurance that our souls have yet
A power to feel and answer to
A longing for the good and true.
And better so, to pay the debt,
And serve the Truth with hearts that ache,
Than doubt its beauty, or forget.

Yes, better so ; the pain we need
To prove that we still live, although
So far removed from life indeed.
And yet 'tis bitter—O, it is
Too bitter, to have failed to know
The life we looked for long ago,
Whose evidence is changing bliss,
Sure love and faithful hopes, that lead
Securely onward—not to this !

A MAN'S FAILURE.

I

“COME, I will walk my garden round,
And many a goodly flower refuse,
Until the fairest one be found
That ever rose-tree sighed to lose ;
That will I choose.

2

“That will I fasten in the hair
Of her who loves me long and true.
Droop not, O rose-tree ! to lie there,
The sweetest flower that ever grew
Would part from you.

3

“ So perfect shall it be, that they
By whom its worthiness is seen,
Shall wonder at it all, and say,
‘ A lovelier rose in shape and sheen
Has never been.’

4

“ For truly she, who doth exceed
All others in her power to bless
My spirit in its utmost need,
Should find *my* offering no less
Than perfectness.

5

“ This one, I think, was never sweet ;
And these are fading—pass them by ;
These are all dusty from the street,
And these it were in vain to try,
Sun-bleached and dry.

6

“ And these—but what avails my care ?
All are imperfect and unsound ;
Are these the flowers I thought so fair ?
Though I search all the garden round,
Not one is found.

7

“ Ah, my heart wearies : yet I know
That she will think that gift the best,
However poor, which I bestow,
Because her love, without request,
Supplies the rest.

8

“ Nay, e'en with gladness she would take
This very rose, with scarce a trace
Of living beauty, for my sake,
And wear it, like a thing of grace,
In the world's face.

9

“ So what I am is best to her,
Because she so believes in me ;
Not blindly, as a worshipper,
But with Love's vision, that can see
What I would be.

10

“ What I would be—but does she know
The fulness of my heart to-day ?
Her woman's love has power to show
Its depth to me in many a way,
Without delay ;

11

“ But my man's love can but in part
Show how its deepest pulses move :
I say, ‘ I love with all my heart ; ’
But what that heart is, what that love,
I cannot prove.

12

“ She asks no proof ; but I would be,
In outward, as in inward show,
The very man her love doth see ;
Else am I false to her, although
She may not know.

13

“ So, when an offering I bring,
Relying on her love to make
A value for a worthless thing,
'Tis not enough that she will take
It for my sake.

14

“ And so this flower, so faint, so pale,
The best that all my garden shows,
Is nothing—nothing—and I fail.
Ah, my sad heart, how faint it grows,
Like this poor rose ! ”

15

So, clouded by wise foolishness,
That mingles true and false always,
Failing where most he wished success,
This man, like many an one to-day,
Went all astray.

16

And, though then wishing to be true,
Unconsciously kept going fast
Out from among the faithful few,
To where Love's sacred ground at last
Was wholly past.

17

And sordid dust of selfish strife
Is over all that he has done ;
And she, remembering former life,
Must mourn the day forever gone
When they were one.

18

O, foolishness of man ! that says,
 “ Because I love her, I will go
Apart and win the world's loud praise,
 To tell what else man cannot show,
 Nor woman know ;”—

19

That measures woman's love by rule,
 And half mistrusts its purity
Because it is so bountiful ;
 Then thinks, “ She loves, for she can see
 What I will be ;”—

20

That calls men's love a little thing,
 Unless it wear a worldly dress ;
That spurns the simple offering,
 Which love can make indeed no less
 Than perfectness ;—

21

That withers up one human heart,
And makes another desolate ;
That says to Love, " Stand here apart,
While I go down to prove you great."
Too late ! too late !

MOONLIGHT.

“**N**AY, wait me here—I’ll not be long ;
 ’Tis but a little way ;
I’ll come ere you have sung the song
 I made you yesterday.

“ ’Tis but to cross yon streak of light,—
 And fresh the breezes blow ;
You will not lose me from your sight—
 One kiss, and now I go.”

So, in the pleasant night of June,
 He lightly sails away,
To where the glimmer of the moon
 Lies right across the bay.

And she sits singing on the shore

A song of pure delight ;

The boat flies on—a little more,

And he will cross the light.

The boat flies on, the song is done,

The light before him gleams ;

A little more, and he has won :

'Tis farther than it seems.

The boat flies on, the boat flies fast ;

The wind blows strong and free ;

The boat flies on, the bay is past,

He sails into the sea.

And on, and on, and ever on,

The light lies just before ;

But ah, forevermore is done

The song upon the shore !

AT SEA.

I

WHITHER we sail, who knows?

But still the yearning grows,
And still the eager ear
Some promise seems to hear
In every wind that blows.

2

And nowhere can we find,
We of the restless mind,
An answering joy to pain,
Save where the broad sails strain
Before the rising wind ;

3

Save where the flying spray
The fever of delay
Cools from the heated face,
Bent forward in the chase
Somewhither day by day ;—

4

Save where we still can feel
The sea beneath us reel
With longing pain and strife,
True to the dream of life
Which is its woe and weal ;—

5

Save where the clouds that range
The boundless sky, and change
With every breath of air,
Yet ever calm and fair,
Give comfort, true and strange ;—

6

Save where the storms we meet
Are Nature's, that defeat
Fear's sloth, and make more clear
And pure the atmosphere,
To keep our purpose sweet ;—

7

Save where our very sleep
A motion still doth keep,
That lets us ne'er forget
The dream which lures us yet
To follow through the deep ;

8

That dream which, when the dull,
Cold, heavy storm, too full
Of doubts and darkness, passed,
In the sunlight at last
Rose glistening, beautiful.

9

O dream of what shall be !
Born of the restless sea,
And floating high between
That and the sky's serene,
Far-off immunity :

10

Something of both must rise
In every soul that tries
To keep thee still in sight,
So hard to love aright,
Harder to realize !

11

And long the way, indeed !
But why should we be freed
Before we know it all ?
Whatever else befall,
The *hope* is what we need :

12

And still the pain obeys
The longing that allays,
And shapes it to its end ;
To make, when both shall blend,
A hope that ne'er betrays :

13

Still we can keep the chase,
Led by that shape of grace ;
Still strive, and strive again,
Hoping, we know not when,
To see her face to face.

14

What else ? Ah, yes ! we know
That we are sailing, now,
That sea where many a brave,
True heart has found its grave,
But still we choose to go.

•

15

Nay, must ! How shall we dare
To leave them lying there
Unanswered, each brave heart
That dared and did his part,
And died without despair ?

16

All, all the more may we
Trust the old prophecy,
And sail, still singing thus
The old song sent to us
Along the stormy sea !

A BLASTED TREE.

O UR care and waiting have nought availed ;
The boughs are blasted, no fruit can grow.
Am I to blame that the tree has failed ?
I planted it deep enough long ago.

Planted it deep enough, watched it well,
Fenced it close from the trampling foot ;
Am I to blame if a blast from Hell
Scorched and withered it, branch and root ?

Here was the earth for its roots to hold,
There was the sky for its top to find ;
Who would have doubted, who saw unfold
Those perfect leaves to the summer wind ?

Not you, my friend ; for you sat with me
Under the tree as it grew so fair,
Marked how it blossomed, and hoped to see
And taste the fruit that its boughs should bear.

Ashes and dust are its fruits, behold !
Look at the shadow it casts us now !
Is that a shade as we planned of old,
To cool a man with an aching brow ?

Look at the branches, so black and gaunt,
Like brands of shame on a shrinking sky ;
Is that the green that we used to vaunt
As a resting-place for a weary eye ?

Is that a place whither birds may wend ?
(For that was part of our dream, you know.)
Look at that bough—we have raised, my friend,
A noble perch for a cawing crow !

Fruit and singing—we have them both,
Brave, bold tree with a steady root
And a lifted head ; we have kept our oath :
Planted a tree—and a gallows to boot !

And yet, my friend, we have done our best,
You with your sympathy, I with seed ;
And now, as our labor deserves its rest,
The work of our lives is a curse indeed !

A curse for us, and a curse for all,
Just as we meant that the joy should be ;
O, it is hard that this should befall
When the seed was sound, as we both agree !

Well ! there it stands, our hope and shame,
Our truth Hell changed to a hateful lie ;
And we can bear with the scornful name,
For God will alter it by-and-bye !

AN ENEMY.

I

WELCOME there—my heart is strong,
 Ready to meet you, my enemy !

And we have shunned each other too long ;

Now let us fight to the end, and see

For which of us is the victory.

2

Fiend or angel ! here I stand,

Ready to wrestle the long night through,

Shoulder to shoulder and hand to hand,

And one of us falls, or I or you,

Ere morn's gray veil slips over the blue.

3

Fiend or angel, stand, I say !

For what you are I will know aright ;

Better to die at the break of day,

Than pass you now. So stand to the fight !

A curse or a blessing I win to-night.

THE GOOD PURSUIT.

I

I DREAM of the time when she
 Whom I follow and dimly see,
 And love still more and more
 As ever she flies before,
 True leader and guide to me :

2

I dream of the time when she
 Shall be clearly seen by me,
 Still flying, the beautiful one,
 Still leading me on and on
 To the lands which poets see.

3

I dream of the time when she
Shall be won at last by me,
At the edge of the promised land,
Which we enter hand in hand.
And I dream of what shall be.

4

Meanwhile, 'tis a joy but to see
The white robe beckoning me ;
Time enough for a sight of the face,
When I prove myself true to the chase,
And am what she persuades me to be.

A PATH.

THIS is the way she went when last
 I saw her, standing beneath this tree,
 And watching, until, the gray rock past,
 She turned with the path and was lost to me.

Lost, while her voice yet filled my ears ;
 And I said to my heart, that hardly heard,
 How love gives life to the future years !
 And the world is renewed by a woman's word !

Lost, while I stood here all aglow
 With the smile she left me, dreaming thus ;
 But never dreaming—how could I know ?—
 Earth's joys were over for both of us.

How could I know that, once let fall,

Her hand should never meet mine again?—

That, once she was gone, I might call and call,

As my heart now calls her, and all in vain?

How could I know that this path she trod

Was so much more than it seemed to be?—

No way of earth, but the way to God,

Ending in heaven, so far from me.

How could I know it? But now I know:

This is the way that she walked, and I

Will walk it too, and—God grant it so!—

Perhaps I may come to her by-and-bye!

ANTEROS.

I

HOW strange ! A year ago
 Was I with you,
 Full in the light that hides your eyes,
 And heard your bosom's fall and rise,
 And saw the full lip's speaking swell,
 And never knew,
 Nor cared that you, mistaken so,
 Had that to tell
 Which it were more than joy to know !

2

But now, that you are gone,
 I long in vain ;
 And hear those lips, too far away,
 Tell all I would not hear that day,

And feel those eyes burn in me now
With aching pain,
And shine before me fully known,
Only to show
That I am lost, and all alone.

3

So ships too carelessly
May leave the gleam
Which marks the harbor they have sought,
And sail it by without a thought,
But, when the light is far behind,
Wake from their dream
And would return. It may not be ;
For the mad wind
Has caught them on the lonely sea !

A ROSE.

I

WHO but knows
Nought reprieves

From decay
Once begun ?
One by one,
See the leaves
Of my rose
Fall away !

2

Fall the rest !
Was it I,
Long ago,
Dared to say :

In a day
It shall lie
On a breast
That I know ?

3

'Tis a thing,
At the best,
For her scorn ;
Ere she knows,
Hide it close ;
Save her breast
From the sting
Of the thorn !

COMPENSATION.

THIS is the rosebud that sighed to be chosen,
 And this is the rosebud she chose—
 One grown in God's sunlight a beautiful blossom,
 A wide-opened rose ;
 One merely a bud on a woman's sweet bosom ;
 Two lives far removed.

But who shall judge these, and say which fate
 were better ;
 Each loses a something the other would gain—
 One the joy of the rose, one the joy of the bosom ;
 But no life is vain :
 And who knows but hereafter the rosebud may
 blossom,
 The rose be beloved ?

A SPRING SONG.

CAN it be—can it be that the Spring
Finds me still struggling here all alone?

Ah! the birds that I love, how they sing

In their joy that the Winter is gone!

But, for me, I am pale with dismay,

As I mark how my youth, day by day,

Wastes and wears in a feverish strife

With the shadows that thrust me away

From the wide-open gate of my life.

Be it so! There are ways yet untried,

And I fight, and I fight till I fall.

At the least I can fight, holding fast

To my hatred and scorn of them all,

Till I meet the old ally at last,

And Death helps me to thrust them aside.

FAINT HEART.

I

WHERE she is, who can say,
Whom my longing has created ?

I have hoped and I have waited,
Even now on the way,
Growing lonelier every day,
Walk as bravely as I may.

2

But my life, that before
Seemed so worthy of bestowing,
How it changes with my going !
Though I love more and more,
Love's lost value I deplore,
That no hoping can restore.

× 3

Yet, my love, I am true ;
Still, through all the years, am saving
This poor love, not worth your having.
It would be now to you
But a sorrow, if you knew ;
So I follow, not pursue.

A VAGABOND.

BATTERED and bruised and weak and worn,
 From a useless fight that brought but pain—

Pain and weariness fit for scorn—

To whom should I come but to you again,
 Old Rock, that I left so long ago ?

Hard, like the rest, is your heart, I know,
 And stern your face ; but how cool it is

To the heated forehead that throbs and aches—

To the burning cheek that has known no kiss
 So close and good as the old Rock makes !

Take me, old Rock, from the lonely town ;
 I come to you for a long night's rest.

How good, after suffering, to lie down
Safe at last on a faithful breast,
That will not shrink as the others do !
And yet God made me, they say ; and you—
He made you too, for a friend, and a bed
Where a weary man may lay his head,
And sleep and be quiet, and have an end.
O the good, hard bed ! O the good, firm friend !
Found out at last, as I always said—
As I always said.

UNKNOWN BLESSINGS.

I HEARD one say, the other day,
 When speaking of a friend he knew
 And loved, though he was far away,
 “God bless him, for his heart is true !”

And musing to myself, I thought,
 How many blessings come and go—
 How many words of love unsought,
 That he they speak of cannot know !

And now, perhaps, one far away,
 A friend whom long ago I knew,
 May think and speak of me, and say,
 “God bless him, for his heart is true !”

Strange mystery of joy and pain,
That keeps with us where'er we go !
The sweetest praise that we can gain,
Is that which we can never know !

But marking whence the yearnings start,
And what it is to which they tend,
I seem to touch the living heart
Of one all-knowing, perfect Friend.

A SINNER.

HARD enough is it, when spurning
 Earth's joys, I would reach those above ;
 When the soul lifts itself by its yearning,
 And strives with the power of love ;

Hard enough is it then, even,
 To climb and be sure that I rise ;
 Yet—for I climb and choose heaven—
 The pain can be borne till it dies ;—

Till it dies, or I die in the striving ;
 What matter, so long as but true
 To the hope and the love of true living,
 I climb, and the climbing renew ?

Climb and climb on, though believing
But half in the progress I make,
Yet sure of one thing—I am leaving
The false, the known false, for truth's sake.

Would that the story here ended !
I leave, though I may not attain ;
And strive, though forever attended
By darkness, and doubting, and pain.

Would these were all ! enough, surely,
Were these to be borne as a weight,
Though the flame of my yearning burnt purely,
Too strong to die out or abate.

But mark here the shame, and confess it,
That often I *choose* the low place ;
Feel the soul rise, but repress it—
Choose what I know to be base !

Choose it, and loathe it, but choose it ;
Turn, and go with it below ;
To the true voice that bids me refuse it,
Listen, and calmly say, No !

Drawn by no subtle deceiving,
Lured by no counterfeit light,
Caught in no mad unbelieving,
Foiled by no terrible fight ;

Not unawares, but just choosing
The thing that I know to be base ;
Spite of the soul's sad refusing,
Forcing it down to disgrace !

Pain, darkness, and doubt, how they weigh me !
But, spite of these, much may be done ;
At the worst, perhaps, they but delay me
From what should be painfully won.

Would they were all ! Let me even
Gain nought by my labor but pain,
If I only have truthfully striven,
Let the strife, if it can, be in vain.

Only save me from basely refusing
To follow the truth when it calls ;
Only save me from wilfully choosing
The thing that I know to be false !

Only save me from these, and wherever
Life's ending may find me, yet then
The one fact of persistent endeavor
Shall give grace to its story. Amen.

WON AND LOST.

WE could have lived and loved aright ;—
What mockery the words appear !

I saw your naked heart that night,

Just for a moment touched it near,

And felt it throbbing for the light

Which would have made it clear.

A moment—yes, but that alone,

In passing, made us what we are ;

I won, and lost what I had won :

As men look sidewise at a star,

And look again and it is gone,

And after, is too far.

Whose was the fault, then ? Mine, I say ;
Love chooses when to grant his grace,
And we must wait it night and day ;
But I, surprised at time and place,
Just saw it as it slipped away,
Lost in a moment's space !

Then came the world to claim its part ;
The merry music filled the hall ;
I saw the sudden flush and start
That sudden passed, and these were all
That told me how the woman's heart
Was changed beyond recall.

And I, who might have set you free
To leave the narrow life, and grow,
And saved myself, have lived to see
A light within your eyes I know
Will change no more till death. Ah me !
For I have made them so.

'Twas hard enough for me to bear,
That I should lose, for what is past,
My life I thought to make so fair ;
But now I shudder all aghast
At what you are, through me ; and there
You are revenged at last !

For, since his deeds have no recall,
For man to wrong himself alone
Is bitter ; but the sting of all
Comes when at last this truth is known,
That he must wrong, at every fall,
Some soul beside his own.

LOST AND WON.

I

TRUE heart ! I knew how it would be ;
 And now I have and hold you fast.
 I knew it ; something said to me,
 “ Be true yourself, and she
 Will come to you at last.

2

“ Be quiet—wait ; you love her so,
 You cannot fail—she is your own ;
 She wanders now, but she will know,
 And love in turn bestow,
 When once your love is known.”

3

And so I saw you pass me by,
 And, hoping, hardly felt the pain ;
 And you went on and on, but I
 Sent out my heart to try
 Your heart, and not in vain.

4

For just as one who, as he goes
 Among the flowers, may chance to see,
 With careless glance, an opened rose,
 And passing, hardly knows
 'Twas there ; but suddenly,

5

When he has left it far behind,
 A sense of eager longing turns
 Him quickly back again, to find
 A joy but half divined,
 For which he strangely yearns :

6

So came a sudden thought to you,
And thrilled your heart, and made you say,
“Somewhere I saw the good and true ;
Let me go search anew,
And find it if I may.”

7

And so you came, with eager care
And longing eyes, to find me out—
Me, who was waiting for you there,
Content to wait and bear,
To hope, and never doubt ;

8

And my heart drew you straight to me,
And waiting, wandering were o'er ;
And then—I knew how it would be—
I caught you, thus—and we
Are one forevermore !

THE LIFE OF LOVE.

I. Under the Trees.

Al- ARTHUR.

SO, we are far enough away,
 To find ourselves this summer day—
 . Ourselves, who were but lost before.
 And here, too, is the place we've sought
 Since long ago, and never found
 Till now we pause, and seek no more.—
 Found out by what great care and thought?
 A butterfly was hither bound,
 And him I trusted to the last,
 The best of guides, who never fast
 Nor straightly to the end will fly,
 But round and round, and to and fro,

And lets us saunter as we go,
E'en to the place for which we sigh.

HELEN.

Best guide, indeed ! Look back, and see
Through what full fields he made us stray,
Of waving, changing gold and green,
Unknown to all but you and me ;
Where daisies look to heaven alway,
And wide awake on earth are seen,
Yet ever calm-eyed and serene ;
Where gay grasshoppers hang and swing,
And unseen crickets shrilly sing,
And, dreaming in the sunny air,
The drowsy bee forgets his care.

ARTHUR.

Sit here, just where the elm trees bend
Their branches to the stream below,

And listen to the songs that flow,
And change and flow without an end,
Mixed with the voices of the air,
And beating of our hearts that yearn,
And try if you can catch the rare,
Hid grace that I can never learn,
Though half unconsciously I seem
At times to know them when I dream ;
But when I strive to think, in vain,—
They change, and baffle me again.
So listen, while I hold your hand,
And if you find the mystery,
Perhaps 'twill come from you to me,
And so I too shall understand.

HELEN *sings*.

If you and I could stay and stay,
Holding fast this summer day,
Here beside the water's flowing,

No one knowing
Whither we had slipped away !
If you and I could o'er and o'er
Live the moments lived before,
Here beside the water's flowing,
No one knowing
How our love grew more and more !

ARTHUR.

Reach now, and see if you can pull
That flower, whose whiteness seems to
change,
As, letting fall its perfect head,
It sees itself within the pool,
And starts and blushes rosy red,
Like some sweet girl, who thinks it strange
That she should be so beautiful.
Now let me place it in your hair,
Where from the first 'twas meant to be ;

God grant that all who are as fair
May find as fair a destiny !

HELEN.

'Tis strange that you should love me so !

And yet not strange, but only true,
That you love me as I love you ;
And that is all I care to know.

Do you believe that this flower knew
How for itself 'twas loved by you,
And how I love it for your sake ?

I know, and so my heart is full
Of love to God, that He should make
The one you love so beautiful.

ARTHUR *sings*.

O, it were sweet !
Ever to lie thus at your feet,
Steadily gazing, not at the skies,

The empty skies that are fixed above,
But into the depths of falling eyes,
Where a naked soul in its beauty lies,
Answering back to me love for love.

O, it were sweet !
Ever to lie thus at your feet,
Steadily watching the curvèd grace
Of your white, white neck, as it slowly bends,
Slowly bends through the waiting space,
Till all at once, on a longing face,
I feel your lips, and the singing ends.

HELEN.

You are my poet, singing songs.
Sweet songs that only flow for me ;
Were it best, love, to keep you so ?
And say, while yonder the world longs
With a strange sense of hidden melody,
Which he alone can bid them know,

He keeps apart, and none but me
Knows where the sweetest songs may be ?
Rich world—if but its wealth were known !
Poor world, that cannot find its own !
And what am I, who have you here ?—
You, with your singing strong and clear—
You, all of you, heart, soul, and mind,
Whom the poor world looks out to find—

ARTHUR.

And would not know if I were found.
But you have found me with those eyes
That see a soul through all disguise,
And I am yours ; so, hold me bound.
True soul of mine ! because you came
Before the world could make its claim,
And all at once I found my life
Without the doubtful toil and strife,
Because, what all the rest would gain,

I have, without their wearing pain,
Shall I regret it? Hold me bound!

He sings. •

How were it best to hold me bound—
With the little fingers linked in mine,
Or the two arms clasping me around?—
Not tight, for I will not try to go,
If all the while those eyes will shine,
As now, to make me love them so.
Or were it best of all that hair
(I wonder how you keep it there,
From falling down with a flash of light,
To hide you even from my sight)—
Or were it best of the hair you wear
To make for us both a golden chain,
That would bind us close, and bear the strain
Of a thousand years of care and pain?

HELEN.

Perhaps 'twere best of all for you,
That I should make you still pursue.
Somehow I think that, to be true,
One must be true to more than one ;
And yet, for me who love you so,
'Twould be too hard to let you go ;
And yet, to keep you all alone,
Seems almost like a shade to be,
That keeps the sunlight selfishly,
Unheeding, so itself be blest,
The outer need of all the rest.

ARTHUR

The flower that blushes in your hair
The busy world might think was fair,
If they should see it lying there.
But if they saw it growing low,
What would they think of it, or know ?

So I am yours to pluck and wear ;
And think not that the world will care
To lose a flower they never knew
Till they were told of it by you.
Do I not keep you even so ?

And think you that our lives are less,
Because we choose to have them grow
Unsoiled by outer dustiness ?

HELEN.

Have I, then, such a hold of you ?
Then may God help me to be true !
And I am weak. But you are mine—
Remember, mine—all mine, mine, mine !
Nay, chide not, for I will not hear ;
And you are wrong—'tis not a tear :
A drop of coolness from the flower ;
Or, if it be a tear at all,
'Tis one that your own eyes let fall ;

Kiss it away——So, that is best !
And—for your brave guide of an hour
Is gone—the way of butterflies—
I will guide you to the rest.
Yonder now our pathway lies,
To the sunset and the West.

II. Under the Sky.

ARTHUR.

“**P**ERHAPS ’twere best of all for you,
That I should make you still pursue.”

Dear, did you know, a year ago,
When your sweet voice said this to me,
What God had planned our lives to be?
How all is changed, since then, for us!

For then, beside you, hand in hand,

I stood, and thought: Lo, I attain

The summit of my life’s demand;

And so, made glad and glorious,

What more is there for me to gain?

But God looked down upon you there,

And all at once I saw you change—

Become more fair who were so fair,
Attain a height that made you strange ;
And suddenly a greater range
Of fuller life was opened wide,
To which your soul, not mine, was grown ;
And then I missed you from my side,
And shuddered to be all alone.

And yet was glad ; for when I knew,
Life's hindrances at once laid by,
You gained indeed the good and true,
How could I not be glad for you ?
You walked among your peers.—But I
Was not your peer ; and there the pain
Reached out and stabbed me once again.
And as I reeled, and strength was less,
Through anguish of unworthiness,
They caught me blinded with my tears—
The clinging crew of doubts and fears,
And wrestled with me for my love.

But as I wrestled there and strove,
Was it a dream ?—or did I hear,
Breaking the silence of the night,
(That awful silence, when the fight,
Breathless before the final strife,
Ceased for a moment long as life,)
Was it a dream, or did I hear,
Speaking sweetly low and clear,
Just as of old, a voice I knew ?—
“ For you are mine ! ” At once there grew
A conqueror’s strength within my soul,
And, wrestling down each doubt and fear,
I stood erect, elate, burst through
The mists that hung about my sight,
And, stretching forward in the light,
Beheld my life, its course and goal.

O love—my love ! still mine, I say,
Though gloriously far away ;
Mine to be won and claimed some day,

Though life no longer sees us stand,
As once, together hand in hand,
Yet we are nearer than before.
For lo ! my love grows more and more,
And gains a power to understand
And answer love's supreme demand.
Nearer we are—more near shall be ;
For, strengthened by your love, and His
Through whom my life is what it is,
I journey to the height I see.
So far and high ? But I shall rise.
So hard ? No other satisfies ;
Let me rest there. And so, meantime,
Rejoicing in the far-off goal,
I make the yearning of my soul
The labor of my life, and climb.

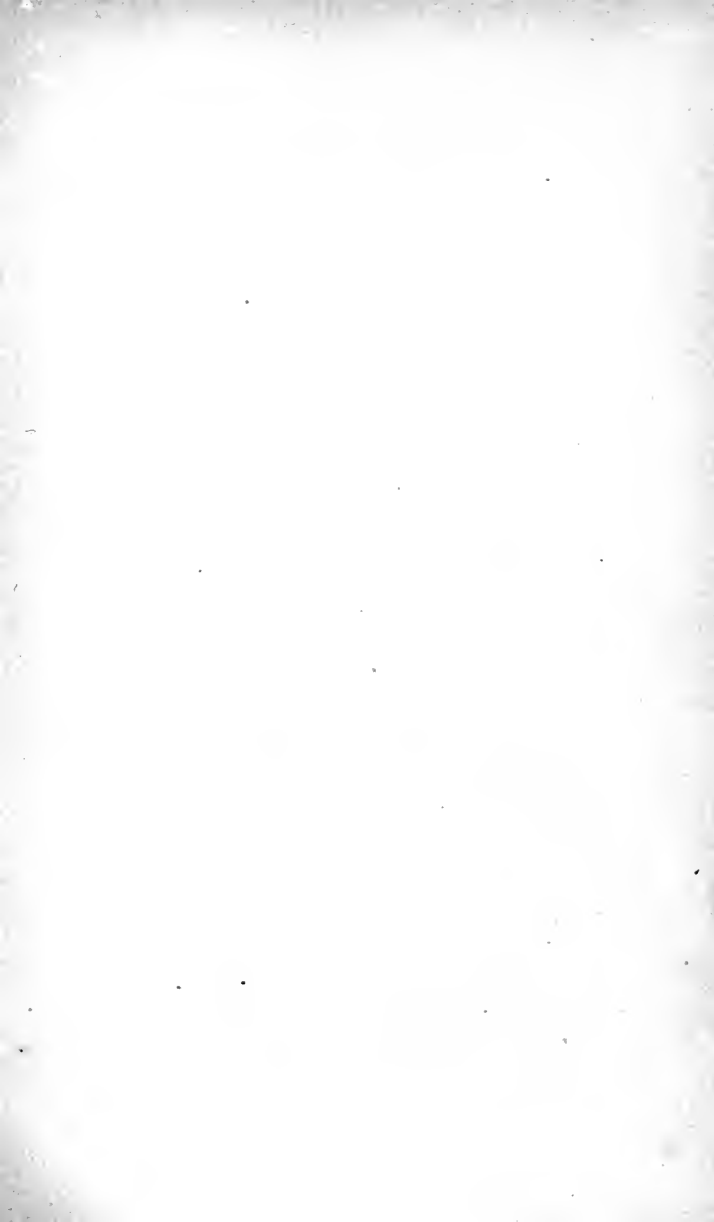
EPILOGUE.

AD MUSAM.

LOOK at me, Dear, from where thou art, who
knows ?

Look at me, lifting empty arms on high,
And mocked at by the unwaiting wind, that blows
Its scornful breath upon me, and goes by
With a low laugh at him who waits so long ;
And still waits hoping, though an awful throng
Of barren days and nights, is gathering round
Him lonely, who with impotent dismay
Sees his life wasting swifter day by day,
For want of thee, long sought, but never found.

Long sought ! but not sought rightly, or else I
Had found thee long ago—there is the pain !
And yet I love thee, and, though search be vain,
Let me still seek thee, and still seeking die !







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